

Focus Area 1

Build Foundational Support and Plan

Focus Area 2

Strengthen Adult SEL Competencies and Capacity

Focus Area 3

Promote SEL for Students

Focus Area 4

Reflect on Data for Continuous Improvement

the Action Plan

allenges, they can increase the effectiveness of SEL implementation by . strategic planning and support.

quality implementation looks like, WHY it's important, WHEN to engage in e the [PROCESS](#) page for step-by-step guidance on how to engage in the al tools to support your efforts.

ovements to the district's SEL action plan?

ovement, districts work with staff, students, families, and community hat was learned through data reflection (see [Key Activity: Reflect on](#)

[Progress Toward Annual SEL Goals](#)) and share with the larger district community what was learned and how that will inform the district's next steps.

A strong approach to making improvements to the action plan involves:

Summarizing the successes and challenges that were identified

Sharing this summary in formats useful to a range of stakeholders such as

Engaging staff, students, families, and community members to determine

through data reflection.

written reports, public discussion forums/webinars, and online data dashboards.

next steps for SEL implementation as the SEL team revisits Focus Area 1 and the SEL action planning phase.

Providing support to school teams to incorporate what they learn through data reflection into their own action plans.

Supporting school teams in communicating about progress with their school community (e.g., families, students, staff, community partners).

Why should my district adjust our action plan?

Throughout SEL implementation, you likely came across obstacles that delayed or hindered your progress and new ideas that could increase your effectiveness. When you take the time to present this learning to students, families, staff, and other partners and work together to determine what should happen next, your plan will be strengthened by a broader range of experiences and perspectives. This is the core of continuous improvement: learning from your successes and challenges and adapting your approach along the way to increase effectiveness.

Sharing progress, learning, and planned next steps with the larger community raises awareness about what the SEL team is achieving, highlights successes that can be celebrated, and maintains commitment and buy-in. Consistent communication on progress can also encourage decision-makers, such as the superintendent and Board of Education, to provide needed resources for future SEL efforts.

When should my district make improvements to our action plan?

You'll engage in much of this work after reflecting on the past year's data and drawing conclusions around success and challenges towards the end of each school year (See [Key Activity: Reflect on Progress Toward Annual Goals](#)). You might begin discussing action steps for the coming year right away during a data reflection meeting. You might also choose to compile insights from data reflection meetings with different stakeholder groups and dedicate separate time for applying learning to a new year-long action plan. If the planning meeting is separate from the data reflection meeting, be sure to summarize data reflection insights before discussing action steps.

You'll want to prepare key data and conclusions to share with the full district community shortly after data reflection and action planning takes places. This may include sharing progress about the past year's SEL efforts and a summary of implementation and outcome data, as well as any next steps that are planned.

Who needs to be involved in making improvements to our action plan?

Most of the stakeholders involved in other aspects of continuous improvement will also be involved in making improvements to the action plan, though there may be some additional people needed to execute next steps and help communicate with stakeholders. These include:

- SEL lead and team
- Family and student representatives
- Communications department or someone from the SEL team who supports communications (instrumental for ensuring communications about the results of SEL continuous improvement are shared)
- Members of the district Research and Evaluation department (to help determine what data trends and highlights

to communicate)

- Key staff members from departments that lead SEL-related work across the district
- School leadership and their supervisors
- Community partners that help support SEL in the district

Focus Area 1

Build Foundational Support and Plan ▼

...s from data reflection to determine next steps and create action plans and involves providing support to school teams for data-informed action implementation progress and progress towards achieving desired outcomes with ... assess your current level of implementation.

Focus Area 2

Strengthen Adult SEL Competencies and Capacity ▼

Focus Area 3

Promote SEL for Students ▼

...ild on successes.

Focus Area 4

Reflect on Data for Continuous Improvement ▼

...y: [Reflect on Progress Toward Annual SEL Goals](#)), identify SEL strategies y include districtwide or school-level strategies and practices that made or outcome goals. You'll likely want to stick with successful strategies to er they can be expanded to other schools or areas of implementation.

When determining which strategies to continue, determine what specifically led to success and take steps to ensure that areas of strength are sustained and leveraged in the future. For example, areas of strength may be related to effective people or teams, supportive school climate, collaborating partners, or tools and resources that were employed.

2. Determine where and how to overcome challenges.

In areas where you experienced challenges or didn't make expected progress on implementation or outcomes, you'll want to examine what happened to determine how to adjust your efforts.

If you did not make expected progress (See [Key Activity: Reflect on Progress Toward Annual SEL Goals](#)), consider whether you will:

- *Stick with the same implementation goals and try different strategies to overcome previous obstacles.*
For example, your district may have intended to design and implement an [SEL professional learning program](#) for schools by developing a comprehensive menu of professional learning and providing opportunities for schools to learn from each other (achieving a score of "3" on the professional learning [rubric item](#)). Through discussion with school leaders, you learn that they struggled to release staff to attend since sessions were held during the school day and not enough substitutes were available. You may want to adjust your strategy by offering a mix of afterschool and virtual professional learning opportunities and offering the option of allocating district funds for extended day pay *or* substitute pay.
- *Change your implementation focus.*
Alternatively, you may hear from school-level stakeholders that they are inundated with requests for professional learning from different central office departments. You may decide that the time is not right for focusing on the SEL professional learning program until you've first prioritized cross-departmental collaboration (see Focus Area 1, [Key Activity: Collaboration](#)). Your district may then return to focus on SEL professional learning when you can do so in coordination with other departments.

Sometimes circumstances change within a district from the start to the end of a year, and what seemed achievable in the fall may not seem feasible the following spring. This may be due to a change in senior leadership, budget cuts, or departmental restructuring. When this is the case, the district should acknowledge this change in circumstance, describe what they learned from their efforts, and determine whether they need to shift focus or engage in other key activities that would better prepare the district to make progress on SEL implementation.

If you did make progress on your implementation goals, but implementation did not lead to expected outcomes, consider:

- *Were your implementation goals the right match for your outcome goals?*

For example, if your outcome goal was to increase staff capacity and confidence in SEL implementation, you may have focused your implementation goals on implementing a professional learning program (See Focus Area 2, [Key Activity: Professional Learning](#)). However, after discussion with teachers and students, you may learn that it would also be helpful to adopt SEL standards (Focus Area 3, [Key Activity: SEL Standards](#)) so there is a shared understanding of what SEL looks like across the district and for different grade bands. Or maybe you will hear from school counselors and principals that they need support to identify and allocate resources for an evidence-based program ([Key Activity: Evidence-Based Programs and Practices](#)) to help scaffold and structure how school staff implement SEL.

- *Were your outcome goals realistic?*

Sometimes your district may have implemented according to plan and made great progress but still fell short of ambitious outcome goals. You may want to extend your timeline for achieving the goal or revise the goal to reflect a more realistic one-year outcome.

3. Share learnings and plans for next steps with stakeholders.

By this point, your district has completed a year-long SEL continuous improvement cycle, which began when you identified your goals and strategies for the year (Focus Area 1: Organize); executed your plan and documented implementation throughout the year (Focus Area 2 and 3: Implement); and compiled and reflected on data and made decisions about adjustments to next year's plan based on what you've learned (Focus Area 4: Improve).

Now it's time to tell stakeholders what you've learned and how you've planned adjustments for the upcoming year. Districts may approach sharing with stakeholders in a variety of ways, including through a brief annual report or through a public presentation. The specific approach you take depends on your intended audience, their level of engagement, and how you think they will best engage with the information.

Regardless of approach, here are a few recommended areas to consider including in a report to stakeholders:

- Overview of SEL, history of commitment made by district
- Progress made to date in the broader effort
- Overview of implementation and outcome goals for the most recent year
- Introduction of the types of data collected, analyzed, and reported
- Summary of implementation and outcome data
- How stakeholders were engaged in the reflection process, and who was involved
- Key learnings, conclusions, and next steps

Here are examples of districts' reports to stakeholders:

- [Austin ISD 2013-2014 SEL Update](#)
- [Austin ISD Research Brief for the Social and Emotional Learning Technical Report: Student Level Outcomes, 2015–2016](#)
- [Washoe County School District's Annual Data Summits](#) and [SEL Data webpage](#)

Here are summaries of learnings across CASEL's Collaborating Districts Initiative:

- CASEL's report summarizing [key findings from the Collaborating Districts Initiative](#)
- [Evaluation of districtwide SEL implementation by American Institute for Research \(AIR\)](#)

4. Support school teams with data-informed action planning and communication about progress with their school community.

In addition to districtwide action planning and communications, it's important to engage school teams in a similar process of using what they've learned this past year to inform next steps. You may want to bring school leaders or teams together to share their learnings, collaboratively make meaning of data trends among schools, and discuss how they will move forward and what support they would like from the district.

The [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL](#) provides a parallel, school-level process and tools for collecting and reflecting on data for continuous improvement and strengthening an action plan. The action planning process is described in detail in the [Create a Plan](#) section, and additional school-level tools for using data can be found in the [Continuous Improvement](#) section.

You can also support schools in identifying their own key stakeholders and crafting a plan for communicating their SEL progress. Here's a [communication planning tool](#) from the CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL that may be helpful.

5. Launch a new year-long continuous improvement cycle for SEL.

Implementing SEL districtwide is not a one-time process. As one year-long cycle of continuous improvement ends, another is launched to continuously iterate and build on your efforts. Your approach to implementation throughout this coming year should be informed and influenced by the successes, challenges, and learnings of the previous year.

To launch a new continuous improvement cycle, you'll refine your plans into clear goals and action steps (see Focus Area 1, [Key Activity: Shared Vision and Plan](#)). This time around, your district has the benefit of building on new knowledge and practical experience from the previous year to inform your SEL action plan to reach new or revised SEL goals.

▼ Go Back

Focus Area 1

Build Foundational Support and Plan ▼

1 stakeholders and take action.

Focus Area 2

Strengthen Adult SEL Competencies and Capacity ▼

l around action planning

Focus Area 3

Promote SEL for Students ▼

Focus Area 4

Reflect on Data for Continuous Improvement ▼

[ago](#)

ent Voice and Engagement shares resources for district schools to elevate student r student-adult partnerships.

Source: Chicago Public Schools

TAGS

student leadership

continuous improvement

youth voice

[The Continuous Improvement Journey: Where Are We now and Where Do We Want To Go?](#)

This brief offers a case study focused on Guilford County Schools in North Carolina, to illustrate the experience of a research-practice partnership between CASEL researchers and the district and the use of goal-setting, data, and reflection for continuous improvement.

SOURCE:

CASEL

TAGS

research brief

conducting local SEL research

continuous improvement

[SEL: Best Practices and Barriers to Successful Implementation](#)

From Austin Independent School District's Department of Research and Evaluation, this report shares findings from district case studies that underscore the importance of four key themes that influence the quality and sustainability of SEL implementation.

SOURCE: Austin Independent School District

TAGS

implementation support

conducting local SEL research

implementation monitoring

implementation evaluation

[Making SEL Assessment Work: Ten Practitioner Beliefs](#)

The National Practitioner Advisory Group, convened by CASEL and AIR as part of the work of the Assessment Work Group, share a statement of 10 beliefs about assessing SEL, actions to achieve each belief, and reflection questions for leadership teams.

SOURCE: Assessment Work Group

TAGS

student assessment

define SEL metrics

assessment

[SEL Trends: Empowering Youth Voice](#)

From CASEL's SEL Trends series, this issue describes ways that Chicago, Cleveland and Washoe County school districts have recognized students as experts of the school experience and built structures for students to better influence school and district decisions and practices.

SOURCE:

CASEL

TAGS

social studies

SEL partnerships

student leadership

youth voice

[Social Emotional Learning: Goal-Setting and Relationships are Part of District's Academic Core \(video\)](#)

Washoe County School District is featured in this video from Edweek, describing the district's process for developing SEL metrics for instructional purposes and growth.

SOURCE: Washoe County School

District

TAGS

student assessment

videos

assessment

continuous improvement

[Sacramento City Districtwide SEL Program Inventory](#)

This is an example of a third-party report on SEL programs and practices throughout the district, shared by Sacramento City, including a site level inventory as well as findings and recommendations regarding implementation and monitoring.

SOURCE: Sacramento City Unified School

District

TAGS

assessment

evidence-based programs

data dashboards

conducting local SEL research

continuous improvement

implementation monitoring

implementation evaluation

RELATED RESOURCES

[SEL Inventory – Elementary Interview](#)

This interview protocol was used by evaluators at elementary school sites in Sacramento City to gather baseline data on the implementation of SEL programs and practices. Includes handouts that were provided to interviewees.

SOURCE: Sacramento City Unified School

District

TAGS

assessment

evidence-based programs

school visit/observation tool

elementary school grades

data dashboards

conducting local SEL research

implementation monitoring

implementation evaluation

[SEL Inventory – Secondary Interview](#)

This interview protocol was used by evaluators at secondary school sites in Sacramento City to gather baseline data on the implementation of SEL programs and practices. Includes handouts that were provided to interviewees.

SOURCE: Sacramento City Unified School

District

TAGS

middle school grades

high school grades

assessment

evidence-based programs

school visit/observation tool

data dashboards

conducting local SEL research

implementation monitoring

implementation evaluation

[SEL Department and Specialist Logic Model to Improve District SEL Implementation](#)

Describes the purpose, goals, and activities of Austin's SEL Specialists -- good tool for a district team that is lobbying for the creation of new SEL-focused positions.

SOURCE: Austin Independent School District

Find ready-to-use tools

TITLE

[Student SEL Data Reflection Protocol](#)

Student perspective is essential for understanding district data and making equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive decisions. This tool presents a student-led, structured process for students to reflect on school and district data in partnership with adults, to observe trends and discuss ideas for improvement of SEL implementation.

SOURCE:
CASEL

TAGS continuous improvement implementation monitoring implementation evaluation youth voice

[Establish Norms for Data-Informed Conversations](#)

This tool includes ways for facilitators to establish a space for safe and productive collaboration and recommended norms to ensure that the conversation is inclusive of all voices and results in concrete next steps.

SOURCE:
CASEL

TAGS community partnerships continuous improvement youth voice

[Districtwide SEL Action Planning Workbook \(APW\)](#)

Once district leaders have built a shared understanding of SEL, teams can use this workbook to organize priorities and goals and build a robust action plan to guide their work and exploration of the District Resource Center.

SOURCE:
CASEL

TAGS define SEL metrics implementation plan continuous improvement planning

[Develop Annual Goals and Action Plan for SEL](#)

This tool is designed to help district SEL teams develop goals and an action plan for a single year of districtwide SEL implementation. It builds on a district's shared vision, long-term SEL goals, and SEL implementation roadmap.

SOURCE:
CASEL

TAGS define SEL metrics implementation plan continuous improvement planning

[Develop Long-Term Goals for Districtwide SEL](#)

This tool explains how to set long-term SMARTIE-style goals for districtwide SEL implementation. Provides guidelines to get the committee started, step-by-step instructions for defining goals that reflect the district's shared vision, and examples.

SOURCE:

CASEL

TAGS [define SEL metrics](#) [continuous improvement](#) [implementation evaluation](#) [planning](#)

[Data Sources to Analyze SEL Implementation and Outcomes](#)

Use this tool as you consider what kind of data you will need and find data sources you can use to assess progress toward your SEL goals.

SOURCE:

CASEL

TAGS [student assessment](#) [define SEL metrics](#) [assessment](#) [conducting local SEL research](#)
[continuous improvement](#) [implementation evaluation](#)

[Youth Participatory Action Research Hub](#)

Youth Participatory Action Research is an approach that trains young people to conduct research to improve their community and the institutions designed to serve them. This hub, hosted by UC Berkeley, shares curriculum and resources to support YPAR projects.

SOURCE: External website

TAGS [toolkit](#) [student leadership](#) [assessment](#) [conducting local SEL research](#) [continuous improvement](#)
[youth voice](#)
